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# Cannabis Control Commission's Social Equity Program Moves Forward with Six Selected Vendors

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT: Cedric Sinclair, Director of Communications, 857-268-6454;  
Maryalice Gill, Press Secretary, 857-292-4891; [cnbpress@mass.gov](mailto:cnbpress@mass.gov)

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BOSTON—The Cannabis Control Commission (Commission) on Wednesday approved six qualified entities to move forward with the state's procurement process for vendors that will provide training and technical assistance as part of the nation's first statewide Social Equity Program.

The Commission's program is designed to create sustainable pathways into the legal, adult-use industry for Massachusetts residents who have been disproportionately harmed by marijuana prohibition and face barriers to

entering the market. After introducing the program last summer, the Commission began accepting applications from individuals who seek professional instruction and mentoring for entering the regulated adult-use cannabis industry and then issued a Request for Responses to contract with vendors.

“Massachusetts is a leader nationally when it comes to our legislative mandate to include in the regulated cannabis industry the communities that have been disproportionately harmed by the War on Drugs,” said Commissioner Shaleen Title. “With the help of these vendors, our Social Equity Program, also the nation's first to be implemented statewide, will ensure our legal marketplace is accessible to impacted individuals and offer the resources participants need to overcome barriers to entry.”

Out of fifteen proposals received, the Commission has approved the following vendors:

- **Cannabis Community Care and Research Network (C3RN)**: a provider of advocacy, research, and education services related to cannabis, which intends to partner with Holyoke Community College for its contract;
- **Greenlight Business Solutions, LLC**: a provider of client services for navigating the cannabis industry landscape;
- **Massachusetts Recreational Consumer Council (MRCC)**: a nonprofit that seeks to ensure the safety of recreational marijuana consumers by bridging the gaps between communities, local legislators, and Massachusetts businesses;
- **Point7**: a woman-owned, tenured, global management consulting firm dedicated to the commercial cannabis industry;
- **Four Trees Management, LLC**: a cultivation consulting company comprised of industry professionals focused on sustainability and environmental stewardship; and
- **Marketing Edge Consulting Group**: a certified, woman-owned business that collaborates with public and private organizations to help small business owners and budding entrepreneurs.

To identify these businesses and organizations, Commission staff reviewed submissions over several phases and scored them based on curriculum framework; experience working with minorities, veterans, women, farmers, or other disproportionately impacted communities; experience developing digital content; a timeline for deliverables; and budget. The selected entities must now reach a negotiated Statement of Work with the Commission and enter into a Master Agreement prior to starting instruction.

Since the Commission opened the application for prospective Social Equity Program participants in December, more than 100 individuals have been accepted after demonstrating they meet at least one of the following criteria:

Residency in a Massachusetts area of disproportionate impact for at least five of the past 10 years (income may not exceed 400% of federal poverty level);

A past drug conviction and residency in Massachusetts for at least the preceding 12 months; or

Marriage to or child of a person with a drug conviction, and residency in Massachusetts for at least the preceding 12 months.

The Commission held introductory seminars with two cohorts of Social Equity Program participants last month in Worcester and Boston, and will host additional sessions this summer. In the coming months, qualified vendors will commence formal training based on four teaching tracks that are designed to meet trainees' diverse needs and career goals:

Entrepreneurs: those who seek marijuana establishment licensure and ownership;

Core: those who have existing industry experience (either two to six years, or seven or more years) and are interested in managerial and executive level careers;

Re-Entry and Entry Level: those reentering society and those with entry level industry experience (up to two years) interested in entry level careers; and

Ancillary: those with existing skills that are directly transferable to supporting cannabis businesses.

Participants will develop competency in areas such as accounting and sales forecasting, business plan creation, farming best practices, identifying funds and raising capital, navigating municipal processes, tax prediction and legal compliance, and more.

State law requires the Commission to adopt procedures and policies to encourage full participation by disproportionately impacted individuals and to positively affect their communities. Additionally, a legislative mandate requires a study of minorities, women, and veteran business enterprises in the cannabis industry. If obstacles are identified, the Commission is instructed to create training programs designed to achieve their meaningful involvement.

To learn more about the Social Equity Program, visit [MassCannabisControl.com](https://MassCannabisControl.com), email [CannabisEquity@Mass.Gov](mailto:CannabisEquity@Mass.Gov), or follow the Commission on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

## Contact Press Office

Phone: 857-292-4891

Email: [cnbpress@mass.gov](mailto:cnbpress@mass.gov)

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